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8 February 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: Colonel White
SUBJECT : Reading Improvement Course

1. You may recall that on 15 December 1955 I brought to your attention a three page report about the Reading Improvement Course conducted by the Office of Training. The principal thrust in this report was, as I remember, that we could save a lot of money by spending more money on reading improvement. The substance of this report came to General Cabell's attention and he called for the report. Thereafter, the matter came to the Director's attention.

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2. I have just learned that on 24 January 1956 [redacted] met with Mr. Dulles at his request and gave him a rather thorough briefing on the Reading Improvement Course and the techniques employed in this type of training. Among other things, Mr. Dulles said to [redacted] something like this, "I think that reading improvement should be part of the basic training of all Agency personnel." OTR now asks me to ask you to ask Mr. Dulles if he meant it.

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3. It is important to know whether the Director was issuing an order or merely being paternal and sympathetic for the following reasons:

a. The T/O and strength of the Reading Improvement Branch was cut from 6 to 2 at the time the ceiling was imposed.

b. The space and other physical equipment allocated to this function is about to be reduced substantially.

c. If the Director were issuing an order, then it will be necessary to greatly increase the staff, the space, etc., in order that it be carried out.

d. OTR does not believe that reading improvement should be given to all personnel.

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4. OTR will, of course, be satisfied if you should merely inquire as to whether Mr. Dulles meant what he said. Perhaps in this case we would not be too objectionably technical if we concluded that, had the Director issued an order he would have resorted to the normal command structure for doing so. He did not follow up his statement to [redacted] by a phone call or memo to you or Matt Baird. This being so, perhaps OTR should be invited to submit the proposals and the recommendations to you in staff study form so that you might dispose of it in an orderly way.

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